

COUNTRY NORTH VIETNAM
DOI NOVEMBER 1967
SUBJECT SIGHTING OF DEAD U.S. PILOT IN QUANG YEN DISTRICT,
QUANG NINH PROVINCE, NORTH VIETNAM

ACO

SOURCE

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Content: UNCLASSIFIED

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1. AT ABOUT 1100 HOURS ONE DAY BETWEEN 20 AND 30 NOVEMBER 1967, WHILE TRAVELING BY TRUCK ALONG ROUTE 10 FROM TIEN YEN DISTRICT, QUANG NINH PROVINCE, TO THUY NGUYEN DISTRICT, HAI PHONG MUNICIPALITY, NORTH VIETNAM (NVN), (OBSERVED THE BODY OF A U.S. PILOT NEXT TO THE WRECKAGE OF A U.S. F105 JET AIRCRAFT ABOUT 100 METERS WEST OF ROUTE 10 AND VU TUONG MOUNTAIN IN THE KHOAI LAC AREA, QUANG YEN DISTRICT, QUANG NINH PROVINCE, FROM 0930 TO 1030 HOURS THAT DAY, A LARGE NUMBER OF JET AIRCRAFT HAD CONDUCTED HEAVY BOMBING RAIDS AGAINST THE UONG BI POWER PLANT AND THE ADJACENT WATER PLANT NEAR XJ859270 IN QUANG YEN DISTRICT, AND AT THE SAME TIME OTHER U.S. AIRCRAFT BOMBED THE HAI PHONG CITY AREA. AFTER THE BOMBING (OBSERVED THE PLANE WRECKAGE AND THE PILOT'S BODY.

2. ABOUT 20 MILITIAMEN AND CIVILIANS SURROUNDED THE AIRCRAFT AND REMOVED THE BODY FROM THE WRECKAGE. [] OBSERVED THE PILOT'S BODY FOR ABOUT THREE MINUTES FROM A DISTANCE OF TWO METERS. HE WAS A CAUCASIAN WITH A LIGHT COMPLEXION, 35 TO 40 YEARS OLD, ABOUT 1.8 METERS TALL, WEIGHED ABOUT 80 KILOS, HAD AN AVERAGE BUILD, A STRAIGHT NOSE, HIGH FOREHEAD, ROUND CHIN AND A RATHER LONG FACE. HE WORE A LIGHT GRAY FLIGHT SUIT AND A WHITE HELMET. THE PILOT'S HELMET AND SKULL HAD BEEN CRUSHED, APPARENTLY FROM THE IMPACT OF THE CRASH, AND [] OBSERVED PROFUSE ORAL AND NASAL BLEEDING. THE NOSE OF THE PLANE WAS EMBEDDED IN THE GROUND AND THE COCKPIT WAS CAVED IN AND PARTIALLY COVERED WITH EARTH AND ROCK. THE TAIL OF THE PLANE WAS MISSING AND THE WINGS HAD BEEN TORN OFF BY THE CRASH.

3. SOON AFTER 1120 HOURS THAT DAY, FOUR CADRE FROM THE QUANG YEN DISTRICT PUBLIC SECURITY OFFICE ARRIVED IN A JEEP AND TOOK THE PILOT'S BODY IN THE DIRECTION OF QUANG YEN DISTRICT TOWN NEAR XJ870160. (FIELD COMMENT: [] WAS SHOWN BOTH PHOTOGRAPH ALBUMS OF PERSONNEL KILLED AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, BUT WAS UNABLE TO MAKE AN IDENTIFICATION.)

4. (FIELD COMMENT) THE JOINT CASUALTY RECOVERY CENTER (JCRC) EVALUATED THE REPORT AS FOLLOWS:

"1. DUE TO A LACK OF MORE DEFINITIVE INFORMATION, A REVIEW OF JCRC RECORDS HAS PRODUCED FIVE POSSIBLE CORRELATIONS TO THE REPORTED INCIDENT. ALL INCIDENTS INVOLVE NAVY PERSONNEL. THESE ARE:

"A. LTJG JAMES E. T E A G U E JCRC NO. 1460

"B. LTJG WALTER O. E S T E S JCRC NO. 1221

"C. LT CHARLES R. L E E JCRC NO. 1360

"D. LCDR JOHN F. B A R R JCRC NO. 6160

"E. LTJG RICHARD W. M I N N I C H JCRC NO. 1251

"2. THE MOST PROBABLE CORRELATION IS TO THE INCIDENT INVOLVING THOSE PERSONS IN A. AND B.

"A. LTJG JAMES E. TEAGUE AND LTJG THEODORE G. S T E I R WERE FLYING AN F4B ON 19 NOVEMBER 1967 DURING A STRIKE ON A HAIPHONG RAILROAD HIGHWAY BRIDGE BYPASS AT XH717933, WHEN THEY WERE DOWNED BY A MIG. LTJG STEIR WAS RELEASED ON 14 MARCH 1973. DURING HIS DEBRIEFING HE SAID HE COULD NOT VERIFY TEAGUE'S POSSIBLE EJECTION. LTJG STEIR SAW THE AIRCRAFT ON THE GROUND STILL INTACT WITH THE FORWARD

PORTION IN FLAMES, BUT HE COULD NOT RECALL IF THE FORWARD CANOPY WAS STILL INTACT. LTJG STEIR GOT A GLIMPSE OF ANOTHER POW. AT FIRST, HE BELIEVED IT TO BE TEAGUE, BUT LATER HE THOUGHT IT WAS CDR CLOWER. LTJG TEAGUE IS CARRIED IN A CAPTURED STATUS BASED ON A CABLE PHOTO FROM HARSAN ON 21 NOVEMBER 1967 REFERENCING THE CAPTURE OF LTJG TEAGUE IN HAIPHONG. HOWEVER, THIS PHOTO IS NOT OF LTJG TEAGUE BUT OF HIS I.D. CARD. LTJG TEAGUE IS CARRIED IN A STATUS OF CAPTURED.

"B. U.S. NAVY LTJG WALTER O. ESTES AND LIEUTENANT COMMANDER CLAUDE D. C L O W E R S WERE FLYING AN F4B ON 19 NOVEMBER 1967 ON THE SAME MISSION AT XH717933 WHEN THEIR PLANE WAS HIT BY MIG FIRE, DESTROYING ONE WING. CDR CLOWER EJECTED AND DURING HIS DESCENT HE SAW TWO OTHER PARACHUTES, ONE OF WHICH HE BELIEVED TO BE THAT OF LTJG ESTES. HOWEVER, LTJG ESTES WAS NOT SEEN AGAIN AND THE ONLY INFO IS HEARSAY UP UNTIL THE TIME OF LCDR CLOWER'S RELEASE. AS WITH THE EARLIER CASE, PICTURES OF I.D. CARDS WERE RELEASED, BUT NOT PICTURES OF THE POW'S THEMSELVES. LTJG ESTES IS CARRIED IN THE STATUS OF CAPTURED.

"3. OTHER INCIDENTS WHICH CORRELATE CLOSELY TO THIS

REPORT ARE:

"C. LT CHARLES R. LEE WAS PILOTING HIS A4C ON A BOMBING RUN AGAINST A PETROLEUM STORAGE SITE NEAR HAIPHONG AT XJ612624 ON 9 JULY 1967 WHEN HIS PLANE WAS HIT BY A SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE. THE AIRCRAFT WENT DOWN IN FLAMES AND NO PARACHUTE WAS SEEN OR BEEPER HEARD. LT LEE IS CARRIED IN A MISSING-IN-ACTION STATUS.

"D. LCDR JOHN F. BARR WAS PILOTING HIS A4E AGAINST A TARGET AT XJ716660 ON 10 OCTOBER 1967 WHEN HIS PLANE WAS OBSERVED TO HAVE BEEN HIT BY ANTIAIRCRAFT FIRE. NO PARACHUTE WAS OBSERVED AND NO SIGNAL WAS HEARD. LCDR BARR IS CARRIED IN A STATUS OF DEAD. BODY NOT RECOVERED.

"E. LTJG RICHARD W. MINNICH WAS PILOTING AN F8B ON A COMBAT PATROL ON 4 JANUARY 1968. WHILE EXITING FROM THE TARGET AREA, XJ856377, HIS PLANE TOOK A DIRECT HIT FROM A SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE. AFTER THE HIT, A RADIO COMMUNICATION WAS RECEIVED, BUT AFTER THE LOSS OF CONTROL OF THE AIRCRAFT, NO FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS WERE RECEIVED. NO EJECTION WAS OBSERVED. LTJG MINNICH IS CARRIED IN A STATUS OF MISSING IN ACTION.

"4. THE FIRST INCIDENT, ITEMS A. AND B., BOTH INVOLVED

TWO-SEATER AIRCRAFT, WHILE THE LAST THREE ITEMS DESCRIBED INCIDENTS INVOLVED ONLY ONE MAN PER AIRCRAFT. THE SOURCE REPORTS ON AN F105. THIS PLANE COULD BE EITHER A ONE SEATER OR TWO SEATER, DEPENDING ON A SERIES LETTER APPEARING AT THE END OF THE DESIGNATOR, SUCH AS F105C. [REDACTED] DID NOT MENTION EITHER THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF ANOTHER SEAT." (FIELD COMMENT: WHEN ASKED FOR MORE SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE AIRCRAFT, [REDACTED] DID NOT KNOW THE NUMBER OF SEATS IN IT. HE COULD ONLY ADD THAT THE COLOR OF THE AIRCRAFT WAS GRAYISH WHITE.)

5. FIELD DISSEM: DEFENSE ATTACHE FOR JCRC REPRESENTATIVE IN SAIGON: SENT TO CINCPAC (FOR CINCPAC AND POLAD ONLY) USSAG AND VIENTIANE (FOR JCRC REPRESENTATIVE ONLY).